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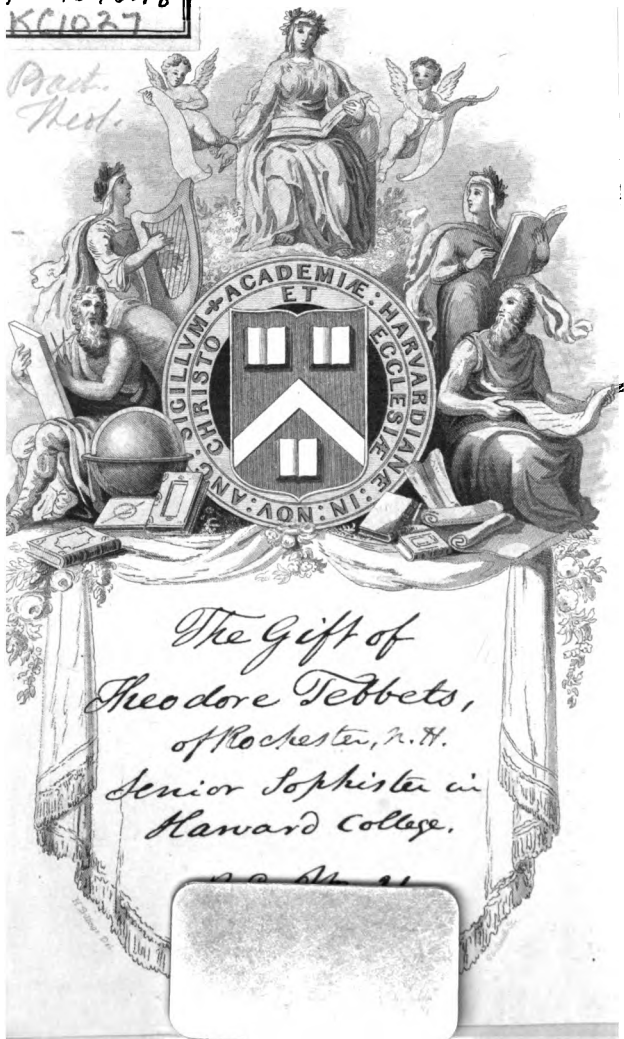
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THE

# HAPPY CHOICE.

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Yield yourselves unto God. — Rom. 6: 13.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth. — Eccl. 12: 1

Choose you this day whom you will serve. — Josh. 24: 15.

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BY CALEB KIMBALL,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG CHRISTIAN DIRECTED," "HOLY SPIRIT  
RESISTED," "SINNER SAVED," &c. &c.

*Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and  
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## PREFACE.

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THESE pages are intended chiefly for the young, whose minds are sufficiently mature to understand their relations to God and eternity, and to feel the force of moral obligation. My aim in them has been to enlighten the understanding, to reach the conscience and the heart, and win the soul to God in the early period of its probationary existence. The subject is one of great moment, and should be kept distinctly before the reader's mind, while perusing this book. If impenitent, he should feel himself personally addressed, and allow the truths here presented to have their legitimate influence upon his understanding and heart. Each chapter should be read with close attention, deep seriousness, and with a spirit of fervent prayer.

Although this book is designed particularly for the young, it may be read with equal profit by those whose age and experience afford an additional reason why they should enter immediately upon a religious life.



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# THE HAPPY CHOICE.





# THE HAPPY CHOICE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *God a Being infinitely worthy of the Sinner's Choice.*

I am that I am. — Ex. 3: 14.

I am the Almighty God. — Gen. 17: 1.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. — Ex. 15: 11.

THE great end of our being is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. As the blessings included in the original design of our creation can never be realized while the heart is alienated from God, I shall urge the young, in particular, and all, indeed, who may read these pages, immediately to relinquish a life of sin, and choose the Lord

Jehovah as their present and eternal portion. "Come, ye children, hearken unto me ; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Psalm 34 : 11. "Unto you, O men, I call ; and my voice is to the sons of man." Prov. 8 : 4. You have, individually, commenced an endless being, and are pressing onward to a vast eternity. The soul is inconceivably precious. Life is short and uncertain. The great work of preparing for another world must be done in time ; it ought to be done in the early period of your probationary existence. You are a sinner, and, while unreconciled to God, you cannot meet him in peace, nor enjoy his presence in his spiritual kingdom. Your heart must be renewed and sanctified by divine grace, and your feelings correspond with those of the saints and angels above. The object of this book is to persuade you immediately to make a safe and happy choice for eternity ; to choose God and Christ, holiness and heaven, as your highest, your eternal good. Whatever may be your age or con-

dition in life, I invite you to read, with attention and prayer, the considerations herein presented ; and may God, by his Spirit, so impress them upon your heart and conscience, that, when he, the chief Shepherd, shall appear, you may be presented spotless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

As I shall urge you to choose God as your unfailing portion, it is important that you should have correct views of that infinite and glorious Being presented to you as the object of your immediate love, obedience, and praise. Who, then, is God, and what has he done ? He is the great Jehovah, the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity. He lives without beginning and without end ; unlimited in knowledge, infinite in wisdom, immaculate in holiness, unsearchable in goodness, omnipotent in power, omniscient in penetration, omnipresent in being, inflexible in justice, universal in sovereignty ; creating, upholding, and governing all things for the high purposes of

his own glory, and the happiness of his universal kingdom.

Think a moment of his infinite power. He had only to speak the word, and heaven was filled with countless myriads of spotless beings, who, like suns and stars, are destined to shine forever in the firmament of his glory. By a single word he created this beautiful world in which you live, its lofty mountains and majestic hills, its lovely valleys and fertilizing streams. By the word of his power he collected together the waters of the vast ocean, and confined them within their bounds, to roll and roar, and lift up their ceaseless voice in a deep-toned anthem to his praise. He had only to speak the word, and trees, and plants, and flowers, infinite in number and variety, sprang up and flourished in spring-like beauty, spreading over creation an ever-varying aspect of fresh and inimitable loveliness. He gave to every leaf its shape, to every shrub its form, and to every opening flower its charming colors, fragrance, and

beauty. By a single exertion of his wisdom and power, God made all the creatures which inhabit our world—beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects, so infinite in number, so various in form, beauty, and proportion, and all adapted to the elements in which they move. Look, also, at man, whom he formed from the dust of the earth to be lord of this lower world, so fearfully and wonderfully made, endued with such noble powers, destined to an endless being, able to reason, reflect, contrive, and execute, and made to fulfil the purposes of the eternal mind. Contemplate yonder sun, that immense body of light and heat, rolling in the centre of its own system, illuminating the planets which revolve around it, rising every day in majesty, and pouring down its glories upon this lower world. This, also, is the work of God. In addition to all these, survey the heavens in a cloudless night; and, as you behold those brilliant stars, hung out in the vast expanse above you, as the permanent reflectors of the

power, wisdom, and glory of their great Creator, I think your young heart will be ready to exclaim, with emotion, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ! The universe is full of thy riches." O, how wonderful, how infinite, how glorious is God ! In the language of Isaiah, "He hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. He smiles ;—they live : he frowns ;—they die. He looketh upon the earth, and it trembleth : he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. He rides upon the whirlwind, directs the storm, and calms the tempest, at his pleasure. This infinite God, though invisible to the human eye, is in every place at the same time, both upon the land and water, observing the evil and the good. He lives in the sun and moon, in

every star that shines, and in the heaven of heavens, where, in a peculiar manner, he displays his glory. There is no place in the universe where God is not. We may adopt the sublime language of the Psalmist, and ask, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

This infinite Being knows all things. Your thoughts and feelings, your words and actions, with the thoughts, feelings, and actions of every other being in the universe, are distinctly known to him. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. "His understanding is infinite." "I, the Lord, search the heart." "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

When you reflect, also, that this great,

this almighty Being, upholds and governs the stupendous works of creation, in all the immensity of their operations, observing alike the fluttering of an insect, the crawling of a worm, the falling of a sparrow, the motions of a seraph, the rolling of a world, you will be ready to exclaim, again, "O, how vast, how wonderful, how infinite, is God!"

But God is *good* as well as *great*. O, yes, reader, he is infinitely good to you, to me, to all. On this point I know not how to speak, where to begin, or where to end. "The goodness of the Lord endureth forever." It shines in the sun, beams in the moon, sparkles in the stars, rolls in the thunder, streams in the lightning, sighs in the tempest, and comes down upon us in gentle dews and plenteous showers, to water and bless the earth, and make the little hills rejoice on every side. The apple which mellows in the sun, the vine laden with the rich clusters of the grape, the bird that cuts the air, and the insect that floats upon the



breeze, are only so many varied expressions of God's unsearchable goodness. Think of the air you breathe : what a blessing this, imparting life and vigor, beauty and health, to every living thing, and yet so common, that you almost forget the gift, and overlook the giver ! Should God withhold it but a few moments, you and every living creature would pant for breath, and soon languish and die. The stream that leaps from the mountain's side, and glides along through fields and forests, spreading fertility and beauty on every side, until its cheerful ripple is lost in the majestic roar of the ocean, is also another expression of God's infinite goodness. What blessings are light and heat ! How rich, how free ! These, also, are the products of divine goodness. Should God withhold them, what a dreary night would spread its mantle over this fair world, and convert it into one vast scene of lamentation, mourning, and woe !

What a blessing is water, and especially that healthful spring at your door, adminis-

tering so abundantly to your daily wants ! What could you do without it ? Were you compelled to walk two miles for every cup you need, you would soon learn, in some good measure, to prize the blessing. But this, also, is the free gift of your heavenly Father. Look at your table, three times every day loaded with the bounties of God's providence, at which you are invited to satisfy, without restraint, the cravings of your dying nature. O, how great is his goodness ! The rich productions of two continents, of numerous islands, of seas and oceans, in all their endless variety, are poured into your bosom. These, too, are the gifts of a God of love.

Think, now, of your health and reason, your bodily and mental powers, your means of education, your home and friends and domestic comforts, which are so many streams of divine goodness flowing down to you from the great fountain. And there is the Holy Bible, that Book of God, that great gift of his goodness to man, in a lan-

guage which you can read and understand, and so cheap that you and every child in the land may possess it, and may learn from it how to live, and how to die and inherit those boundless treasures in that eternal city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." And there, too, is the holy Sabbath, with all its hallowed privileges—that day of sacred rest, in which you may read, and meditate, and pray, and worship God in the great congregation, and thus be prepared for the higher and nobler service in his glorious temple above. O, the goodness of God is a boundless, bottomless ocean, an ocean of blessings, pure, rich, and overflowing, in which you live and move, and from which the wants of every living thing are most amply supplied. Have you ever thought seriously why, instead of reading this book, you are not now with the rich man in hell, lifting up your eyes in torment, beyond the reach of pardon and the consolations of hope—a doom which your sins have a thousand times deserved?

O, it is because God is good, infinitely good, and not willing that you should perish, but that, through these streams of his goodness, you may be led to the blood of atonement, be washed, and justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Look, now, at another feature of God's goodness, which we call his love, his infinite love, in the work of redemption. But how shall I speak of infinite love? What height! what depth! what power to save! O, that I could describe it! But language fails; imagination faints in the attempt. God saw the human family in one vast congregation, all sinners, entirely depraved, rebels against his throne, hateful and hating one another, whose thoughts and feelings were only evil continually. As transgressors of his holy law, they deserved to die; they asked no favor, they expected none; and yet, in all this untold depravity, God loved them as his creatures, and, in the exercise of his exceeding love, brought forth a

ransom. God looked upon his Son, the heir and partner of his throne, arrayed in uncreated majesty and glory, and he loved him as the possessor of this honor and felicity ; but, in a peculiar sense, he loved these sinners more. With his Son's consent, he stripped him for a time of his majesty and glory, took away his crown and sceptre, and veiled his divinity in a body of flesh. He consented that he should appear in our world in the form of a servant, be born in a manger, be nurtured in poverty, become a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, and at last die an ignominious death upon the cross, to atone for human guilt, and save a ruined world. God saw his Son, for our sake, despised, and persecuted, and cast out by the Jews ; and his infinite love endured it. He beheld him, in his bloody agony, in the garden, and saw him betrayed by a disciple, forsaken by his friends, and arrested by a band of soldiers ; and his infinite love endured it. He heard him reviled and falsely accused, at the bar of Pilate, and

saw the Jews spit in his face, and, in derision, smite him with the palms of their hands; and his infinite love endured it. He saw him insulted, and set at naught by Herod and his men of war, and heard the priests and scribes lift up their voices in false and angry accusation against him, and saw him condemned to die, and cruelly scourged by a Roman governor; and his infinite love endured it. He saw the soldiers crown him with thorns, and smite him upon the head, and bow their knees before him in hypocritical worship, and nail him to the cross, and insult him in his dying agonies; and his infinite love endured it. He saw the hosts of darkness make a furious assault upon him, when sinking beneath his atoning sufferings, and beheld blow after blow coming down upon his defenceless head, until he sunk in the arms of death, with the memorable cry upon his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"; and his infinite love endured it. O, the amazing, the infinite love of God to men, which

could bear all this, to save guilty, perishing sinners from the woes of the second death ! “ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Love, from all eternity, rolled like a fathomless ocean in his infinite bosom ; and, when a world of perishing sinners was to be redeemed, it broke over its barriers, and rose, in a mighty tide, in heaven, till it overflowed the walls of the eternal city, and rolled away in endless streams to every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Surely, God is love !

## CHAPTER II.

*The Holiness, Justice, and Mercy of God.*

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Psalm 22 : 3.

A just God and a Saviour. Isaiah 45 : 21.

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious. Ex. 34 : 6.

THE holiness of God is his infinite purity. It diffuses itself through his entire character, and imparts to all his other perfections an indescribable loveliness. Holy angels and redeemed spirits in heaven gaze upon it with unceasing delight. God is holy ; he is infinitely removed from sin, and looks upon it with the most perfect abhorrence. His infinite beauty, excellence, and glory, are but the reflections of his uncreated and unchanging holiness. Take away the holiness of God, and you strip him of that essential



perfection for which, especially, he is adored and loved. Without this, his infinite power, wisdom, and justice, in their combined operation, would not only be unlovely, but awfully terrible. When Isaiah, in vision, saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, whose train of glory filled the temple, he heard the seraphim, the highest order of angelic beings, crying one to another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The holiness of God makes heaven what it is, a place of indescribable purity, joy, and love. All the happy spirits there shine with celestial brightness in the holiness of their great Creator. The holiness of God spreads over that vast, eternal kingdom, one celestial, cloudless, endless day.

But God is just as well as holy. He is perfectly just in all his dealings with his intelligent creatures. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." In the exercise of perfect justice, God never has

done and never can do wrong to any of his creatures, in the smallest degree. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. His justice leads him to do right, and only right, in the minutest as well as the mightiest acts of his moral government. If, in this world, God suspends for a while the operation of justice, to offer pardon to the guilty, at the day of judgment he will render to all precisely according to their works. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

The mercy of God, also, is truly wonderful. When Moses stood upon Mount Sinai to receive the divine Law, God passed by, and proclaimed before him, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." The mercy

of God is that attribute in his character which leads him to have compassion upon the wretched, to show favor to enemies, and bestow pardon and grace upon the guilty and the lost. If, in passing over a vast battle-ground, you should observe an individual going to each sufferer, examining and binding up his wounds, pouring the balm of consolation into his troubled spirit, and conveying him away to a hospital erected and furnished for this purpose at his own expense ; and should you then be told that those unhappy sufferers were the sworn enemies of their benefactor, and had received their wounds in attempting to subvert his righteous government, you would feel at once that mercy was a striking feature in this man's amiable and lovely character. And should you enter that great hospital, and pass along through its neat and spacious apartments, and observe this same individual going from room to room, speaking words of consolation to these afflicted men, and wiping away their tears;

kindly dressing their wounds, and employing every means in his power to soothe their sorrows and alleviate their pains, you would be ready to exclaim, in admiration, "O, wonderful mercy ! lovely compassion ! which can forgive an injury, and relieve an enemy, and feel, and weep, and sigh, amidst the sorrows of the wretched, and with the soft hand of kindness and love soothe the anguish of the distressed and the dying !" Such, in an infinitely higher degree, is the mercy of our heavenly Father. God saw us all sinners, his bitter enemies, transgressors of his holy law, rebels against his righteous government, and exposed to the fire that shall never go out. In all this guilt and ruin, he looked upon us in tender mercy ; his eye pitied us, his heart felt for us, and his almighty arm brought salvation. When justice had lifted its dreadful sword, and was ready to strike the fatal blow, mercy interposed, and plead, "Spare, spare these guilty sinners, for I have found a ransom." Mercy held back the arm of

justice, till Jesus, God's own dear Son, appeared in our world as an atoning Saviour, and assumed our guilt, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He cheerfully received that dreadful blow, which we deserved, and which must have sent us down to the pains of hell forever. Look at him in the garden, sweating in bloody agony under the amazing pressure of a world's iniquities. See him on the cross, suffering, bleeding, dying in our stead, the just for the unjust, to open a way for God; to show mercy to a world of perishing sinners. O, what a change has mercy produced in the forlorn condition of the human family! That fearful night, which brooded over man's eternal prospects, has been broken by the Sun of Righteousness, and a day of glory once more beams in upon the soul. In the light of this day of heavenly grace, the blind may see, the dead may live, the lost be found, and the poor be made rich in faith, and heirs to a crown of glory which fadeth not away. Pardon is offered to all;

and whosoever will, may partake the water of life freely. Though you have committed unnumbered sins, they may all be forgiven, and you be made holy and happy in the presence of God forever. What countless multitudes have already been pardoned through the mercy of God, made perfectly pure, and entered upon the joys of an eternal heaven. Millions more upon the earth, rejoicing in the consolations of pardoning mercy, are marching upward to their home in the skies.

Think a moment of the forbearance of God. He might have cut you and me down for the first transgression, and sent us to a world of endless weeping, as our sins have justly deserved, but he did it not. He spared us in mercy, that we might repent and live. Think of his forbearance toward other sinners, amid all their profanity, lewdness, ingratitude, unbelief, and hardness of heart. Some of them live upon his bounty seventy or eighty years, and never once pray to him or thank him for his mercies,

but often blaspheme his name, despise his holy Word, and, in various other ways, are guilty of the most provoking insults ; and yet he bears with them from year to year, that they may consider their doings, and turn from their evil ways and live. O, wonderful mercy ! astonishing forbearance ! and this is the mercy, this is the forbearance, of your heavenly Father. I have now attempted to give you some idea of that great Being held out before you as the object of your immediate choice for eternity. But, after all, we have not been able to glance a thought half way to God, so immensely exalted is he above the highest conceptions of his intelligent creatures. The object surely, as now presented, is vast, and rich, and glorious enough to claim your attention. O, it is God in all his fulness, eternity, and glory ! It is salvation, salvation from sin and hell, from pains that never cease, from woes which cannot end ! It is holiness in all its heavenly beauty and attractive loveliness. O, it is heaven ; heaven

realized ; heaven enjoyed in all its fulness and perfection ; “ durable riches, immortal honors, imperishable mansions, an unfading crown, an immovable throne, an everlasting kingdom, an eternal weight of glory ; perfect, uninterrupted, never-ending, and perpetually-increasing felicity, in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.” What higher honors can man aspire to ? What richer treasures, what nobler companions, what holier employments, can his heart desire ? All these are offered to you, without money and without price. Yea, more ; for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.



## CHAPTER III.

*The immediate Choice of God, as the Sinner's Portion, urged on the ground of Duty.*

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. — Matt. 22 : 37.

Choose you this day whom ye will serve. — Josh. 24 : 15.

My son, give me thy heart. — Prov. 23 : 26.

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. — 2 Cor. 6 : 2.

HAVING held up to your view the great and holy God as a Being infinitely worthy of your choice, I shall now urge you immediately, and with all your heart, to choose him as the object of your supreme affection and service; and I shall urge you to do it as a matter of duty. Our duty to love God unceasingly, and with all the heart, arises from the relation which he sustains to us as our Creator, preserver, and bene-

factor, and from the claims which he, as a being of infinite excellence, has upon our affections and service. These claims are entire, absolute, and holy, and from such claims we are never to be released. God gave you being, a mind to think, and a heart to feel. He sustains you in existence every moment. You walk upon his earth, breathe his air, are sustained by his food, wear his clothing, and are constantly surrounded with his loving kindness and tender mercy. He gives you daylight for labor, and night for repose. He has called you into existence in a Christian land, and at a period of the world when the light of divine truth shines more brightly and purely, perhaps, than ever before. You were born at the very door of the sanctuary, and are living amidst the sacred institutions of the gospel. You have in your hand the precious Bible, that holy Book of God, and may read it daily, and learn from it the way to heaven. On every seventh day the Sabbath returns, with all its hallowed blessings,

and you may spend the whole of it in religious reading, holy meditation, prayer, and praise. On this sacred day you may go up to the sanctuary of God, and hear his gospel preached, and receive pious instruction in the Sabbath school, and worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness in the great congregation. In love to your precious soul, God has given up his own dear Son to die an ignominious death upon the cross for your redemption. He has, moreover, prepared a holy heaven, to be the blissful and eternal abode of those who, from the heart, choose him as their God and portion. This wonderful being, so great, so holy, and so good, whose glory shines in the sun, moon, and stars, in the clouds and clear blue sky, and whose holiness, truth, and mercy are revealed in the Bible, presents himself before you in all his infinite loveliness, and proclaims, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." The object is now before you, vast and glorious, the infinite God. Fasten your eye and heart upon it.

God requires you immediately, and with all your heart, to choose him as your chief good. The requirement is just. He deserves to be the object of your unceasing love, adoration, and praise. Hesitation here is sin. Your duty is therefore plain, and your obligations to perform it are accumulating every moment, and are pressing upon you with a mountain's weight. From these obligations you can never be released. You ought to choose God now for his own uncreated excellence, and for what he has done, and is still doing, for your salvation. Conscience bids you do it. The Bible requires it. Nature and providence urge upon you the duty. A voice from the multitude around the eternal throne, like the sound of many waters, calls upon you to do it.

Were a pebble, and a diamond worth a million globes of gold, presented to you as objects of choice, and you knew their value, would you hesitate for a moment which to choose? And will you hesitate, when the great Creator and high possessor of all

things, the fountain of blessedness, the centre of glory, is presented to you as an object of choice? Will you hold back your affections here? Will you deliberately prefer sin to holiness, earth to heaven, a dying world to the infinite and unchanging God? Can this be right?

Again. Your Father in heaven proclaims, in his Word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This is a command, and a command from God imposes duty. Your duty, then, is to love God immediately, with all your heart. As your Creator, he requires it; as your sovereign, he demands it; and as your kind parent, who has watched over you with unceasing care, and amply provided for all your wants, he most richly deserves it. Yes, your heavenly Father deserves your best affections, your noblest powers. And can you withhold them? Holy angels love him unceasingly, and so must you. You can love your earthly parents, though imperfect and sinful, and will you not love

your heavenly Parent, a being of infinite holiness, beauty, and glory, whom angels worship, and saints adore? A little Indian girl, who had early chosen God as her portion, could say, as she drew near eternity, "I am willing to die, if God sees best, though I should like to live to do good to my people." The day before her death she appeared very happy, and often requested her adopted mother to sing to her. "I feel," said she, in the triumphs of hope, "as though I could praise and bless God." At another time she said, "I feel happy. It seems as though angels were all around me in the room, and Jesus in the middle." And again she said, "I feel happy; I am not afraid to die, for I think that Jesus will be my friend." Such are the happy fruits of choosing and loving God in the morning of life. Her departing spirit, animated with holy love, appeared to ascend in a pure and celestial flame to her Saviour and her God above. Would you share her blessed portion? then choose Christ as your Saviour

now ; long and pant for the living God, and set your affections upon things above. I entreat you to do it, without delay. O, let it not be true that a heathen child, on whose dark mind the light of divine truth shone but feebly, should embrace the Saviour, be pardoned, and saved, and raised to heaven, there to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb forever, while you, who from the cradle upward have enjoyed the full blaze of gospel truth, were left to withhold your heart from God and die unpardoned, and sink to a world of endless mourning.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The immediate Choice of God urged from the Worth of the Soul and the Danger of losing it.*

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? — Mark 8: 36, 37.

The wages of sin is death. — Rom. 6: 23.

I DESIGN, in this chapter, to urge you immediately to choose God, to love and delight in him, and to prefer his service to that of yourself or of any other being, from a consideration of the worth of your soul and its liability of being lost or ruined irrecoverably in the world of despair.

You have a precious soul to be saved or lost, and its unspeakable value will appear from its endless being, its capacious and



growing powers, and from the price paid for its redemption.

You have commenced an eternal being. When the sun and stars shall cease to shine, and this earth shall be no more, you will still exist, the same conscious being which you now are; able to think, feel, enjoy, or suffer, in a manner of which you now form no adequate conception. You must live forever. But what is forever? Have you at any time attempted to calculate it, or thought upon it seriously for a single hour? Though unable to comprehend endless duration, it is very important that you should have an impressive idea of forever and ever, or the fearful eternity just before you. Suppose God should require a little insect to carry away this great world to the sun, and to carry only one small particle in a million years. What untold ages must roll away before he shall have conveyed to the sun this house, this town, and the great hills and mountains. Think of it; can you comprehend the aggregate? But this is not

forever. What an amazing period must roll away before he shall have conveyed to the sun every particle of earth and every particle of water which compose this world ! But this is not forever. Eternity, humanly speaking, is only just begun. When this amazing period shall have rolled away, you will be no nearer the end of your being than when you commenced it. O, eternity ! eternity ! thou fearful, dreadful thought ! There is no speculation here ; it is all sober reality ; you will know it by experience. Can you find the terminating point in a circle ? It has no termination. This is eternity. But do you ask, "Must I travel in one beaten track upon its circumference forever and ever ?" O, no ! this circle has the power of expansion, so that you will never travel the second time in the same path. And what will be its dimensions, when it shall expand, and expand, and expand, through the countless ages of endless duration ? O, forever and ever ! Amazing, overwhelming forever ! And yet you must

exist through it, amidst delights which flesh and blood cannot sustain, or in fire sufficient to melt down all the planets. O, the inconceivable value which your soul receives from its endless being !

The worth of the soul will still further appear from a consideration of its capacious and growing powers. If you enter heaven, these noble powers, in all probability, will be constantly enlarging to receive new accessions of knowledge and felicity. Should this be the case, a period will arrive in eternity when you will enjoy more in one hour than Gabriel has enjoyed in the whole course of his blissful existence.

The worth of the soul appears, also, from the price paid for its redemption. What was this price ? The life on earth, sufferings, and painful death upon the cross, of the Son of God, a sacrifice of more value in his sight than the whole material universe. Had not your soul been unspeakably precious, God the Father would not have given up his only Son, the dearest object of his

heart, to poverty and reproach, insult and suffering, spitting and scourging, and all the indignities and pains of a crucifixion, to work out its redemption. You have a priceless, deathless soul ; and its imperishable nature, its noble powers, and the price paid for its ransom, prove its value.

“ Worlds on worlds, amazing pomp, redouble  
This amaze ; ten thousand add, add twice ten  
Thousand more : one soul outweighs them all, and  
Calls the astonishing magnificence  
Of unintelligent creation poor.”

This soul of yours, of such infinite value, is liable to be lost, or to experience the pains of the second death. The Word of God declares it. “ The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “ The wages of sin is death.” But you are a sinner, for the Bible declares that “ all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” You have committed many sins, the least of which would expose you to this fearful death. But what is this death ? This we must learn from the Bible,

for we know nothing on this subject except what the Bible reveals. Our Saviour declares it to be everlasting punishment. "These," the wicked, "shall go away into everlasting punishment." Matt. 25: 46. It is everlasting destruction. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." 2 Thes. 1: 7—9. It is everlasting fire. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25: 41. It is outer darkness. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 25: 30. It is torment in hell. "The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Luke 16: 22,

23. It is the wrath of God. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3: 36. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Rev. 14: 10. It is fire that shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9: 43, 44. It is a lake of fire. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. 21: 8. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20: 15. To this death, fearful and eternal as it is,

you, if impenitent, and every other unpardoned sinner, are exposed. There can be no mistake on this point. The Word of God declares, and his word will stand: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." You are liable to die at any moment, and be lost. Youth, property, health, friends, all combined, cannot keep you alive, should God strike the fatal blow. Awake or asleep, at home or abroad, you are in imminent peril. And now, with a soul so immensely precious, and exposed to a death so dreadful, can you rest in peace? Can you sleep, and sport, and trifle, on the brink of endless ruin? Your heart would palpitate should you see a blind child standing carelessly upon an awful precipice, where one short step would plunge him into certain destruction below. But you are that blind child, standing heedlessly upon the brink of everlasting death. The Bible declares that a lake of fire unquenchable is beneath you; into which, if unrenewed, you may drop at

any moment, and sink forever. And do you not tremble? Have you no occasion for alarm? You are in imminent danger. Destruction is beneath and all around you. I must not conceal it. It would be cruelty and sin in me to conceal from you your real condition. God has not done it; and Heaven forbid that I should do it. It can do you no harm to know the worst; it may result in your salvation. The Spirit of God will bless his own truth. You must see and realize your danger, or you will make no efforts to escape it. There is a refuge to which you may flee and be safe. God in Christ is that refuge, and, by an act of faith you must choose him as such, and rest on him as your almighty Deliverer. With a father's tender love he invites, yea, he entreats you to do it. But do you ask, "How shall I do it, so as to be accepted of him?" Fall upon your knees, and, with a contrite, humble spirit, say from the heart, with true sincerity, "Father, I have sinned;"—"God be merciful to me, a sinner." Cast your



self entirely, with all your guilt and helplessness, upon his infinite mercy. Do you feel your need of divine assistance? In faith ask it "of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given you." If you go to God with a contrite heart, in humble faith, he will pardon you at once, and receive you joyfully to the bosom of his paternal love. The returning prodigal found mercy, and so will you. But do you ask, "Can I choose and secure God as my portion *now*?" O, yes! you can and ought to do it now. It is sin to delay it a single moment. When God says, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," he means that you should do it now. When he says, "My son, give me thine heart," he means that you should give it to him immediately. Others have obeyed the divine requirement; have immediately chosen God as their heavenly Father, and set their affections upon things above; and you may follow their example. For your encouragement I will relate a fact. In a crowded congregation,

when the Holy Spirit descended with uncommon power, a little girl, at the close of the service, pressing through the anxious multitude, and coming to the place where I stood, said, with a look and tone of voice bespeaking the deep anxiety of her heart, "I have been seeking religion for some days, but cannot find it. Will you tell me what I must do to be saved?" I was struck with her solemn address and apparent sincerity, and directed her, as I have you, to cast her burdened, guilty soul into the arms of her gracious Saviour, and choose God as her Father, and, with a broken heart, love and obey him without delay. She retired, and shortly after, as she hoped, gave up her heart joyfully to God, and chose him as her unfailing portion. She held on her way, and united with the visible church. Some months after, she was seized with a rapid consumption, and died; but her end was peace. Her great work was done; a sweet serenity sat upon her countenance. Death had lost its sting, and the grave its dreari-

ness. Leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, with the rod and staff of God to comfort her, she fell asleep in Jesus, and ascended, as we trust, to her rest and home in the skies. Now, had that child refused, that favored moment, to make God her refuge, she might have gone down to the grave unpardoned, and sunk to a world of endless burning. O, how precious is the present, favored moment! It is a season of mercy in which you may obtain pardon, and secure a crown of unfading glory. The next hour for you may come too late. Before it arrives, death may cut asunder the cord of life and place you beyond the reach of mercy. And do you say, "I know it all, but cannot feel my sins." Have you tried to feel them? Have you looked at them in the light of divine truth, and, for one half hour, seriously considered their nature and tendency? Suppose you stood in the centre, of a circle, and the millions of sins which you have committed should at once assume the visible form of bur-

nished daggers, and should array themselves around you upon the circumference of that circle, all pointing directly at your heart; would you not feel? And suppose God should command that circle to contract, and you should see it contracting, and contracting, and drawing nearer and nearer to your vitals, until those instruments of death should make one united and dreadful assault upon your life, would you not feel, and cry for mercy too, and ask God, in earnest, to direct the points of those weapons another way? And should some way of escape be opened, would you not flee from them as from a deadly foe? Now, your sins are realities, as much so as if they had visible forms. They are deadly enemies, arrayed all around you, and will soon make one united and dreadful assault upon your life, and destroy both soul and body in hell forever, unless you have on, as a sure defence, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. And can you not feel? Will you slumber and trifle amidst such perils?

"Sinner, turn, why will ye die?  
God, the Saviour, asks you why."

O, hasten to the feet of Jesus, and delay  
not to make God in Christ your eternal  
refuge!

## CHAPTER V.

*The immediate Choice of God urged, on  
the Ground of Happiness.*

Great peace have they which love thy law ; and nothing shall offend them. — Psalm 119 : 165.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. — 1 Cor. 2 : 9.

I SHALL endeavor, in this chapter, with divine assistance, to show what true happiness is, and where it may be found ; and shall hold it up to you as an inducement immediately to make the Lord Jehovah your trust, the Most High God your refuge. And here let me remark, that true happiness does not consist in riches, nor honors, nor worldly pleasures, nor in all of them combined. Crowns and sceptres, the robes of state, and diadems of power, cannot produce it ; nor

can it be obtained from any object merely earthly and perishable. The unconverted never enjoy it. Their happiness is inconstant and unsatisfying, and, like the morning cloud and early dew, it soon passes away. In those bosoms where vital piety does not exist you will ordinarily find a selfish heart, a stubborn will, an aching conscience, restless passions, a thirst for what they cannot find in the perishable objects of the present life;—enjoyment, pure and substantial, is not there. Look at examples. Is the thief happy when, under the covering of night, he takes his neighbor's property, and, with a trembling heart, steals away to some place of concealment? Is he happy, pursued by the hand of justice, when followed, step by step, to the confinement and disgrace of a penitentiary? Is the drunkard happy when, from the scenes of guilt and debasement, he awakes to reflection, and, during an interval of reason, he surveys his ruined character, his shattered constitution, his weeping wife, his

hungry children, his tottering habitation, poverty and ruin stamped upon the fair inheritance of his earlier days? Are the devotees of pleasure happy under the sensation of wounded pride, disappointed ambition, insulted honor, corrupted pleasure, a perverted taste, declining health, approaching death, a guilty conscience, a gloomy eternity?

Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte, with all their ambition and talents, and thirst for empire, were strangers to substantial enjoyment.

Lord Chesterfield, who devoted his life very much to worldly pleasures, became exceedingly disgusted with the scenes of this description through which he had passed; and speaks of such gratifications as vapid, low, mean, and unworthy the pursuit of an intelligent being.

The testimony of Lord Byron, who sought his happiness in the vanities of this world, is substantially the same.

A young man who, for years, had given



himself up to worldly pleasures, observed to me, in an hour of reflection, that he had derived from such pursuits no substantial enjoyment. "My happiness," said he, "consisted almost entirely in anticipation. When the time arrived, something would occur to spoil my enjoyment; and when the scene was past, I was unfit for business, and completely wretched."

But we have far more important testimony from one who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. Solomon observes, "I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; and behold, this also is vanity." Eccl. 2: 1.

You see, therefore, both from examples and from the testimony of those whose experience enabled them to form a correct opinion on this subject, that permanent, satisfying enjoyment is not obtained from the objects of the present world. Pure, substantial happiness is the fruit of holiness produced in the soul by the Spirit of God.

It commences at regeneration, and increases with the progressive work of sanctification, until the soul is made perfectly holy and happy in the full enjoyment of God in heaven. God is essentially and unchangeably happy ; he is the great source of all pure and lasting felicity ; it flows from him as a stream from the fountain. To enjoy it in all its purity and fulness, you must be near him and like him, and, with an eye of faith, behold his glory. O, what a heaven of happiness there is in being entirely subdued to the divine will ; in being humble, meek, lowly, kind, and gentle in our feelings ; loving God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, and having Christ formed in the soul the hope of glory ! This is heaven begun, a happiness suited to our spiritual natures, large as our desires, and durable as immortality. The young convert knows what it is, when he first opens his eyes upon the glories of the Lamb of God, and receives him as his atoning, all-sufficient Saviour, and begins to drink full

draughts of bliss from the fountain of redeeming love. I once spent an hour with two young men who had just given up their hearts to God and found the Saviour to be precious. It was one of the happiest hours of my life. They had been very much devoted to worldly pleasure, but now had entirely lost their taste for those sinful pursuits. God, and Jesus, and holy objects, engaged their attention. A heavenly serenity sat on their countenances, and holy delight beamed in every feature. Their joy seemed complete; their peace flowed like a river. They were filled with love to God their Saviour and to all his people. Their enjoyment was new, pure, elevated; and lasting. They professed godliness, and were not deceived. One of them has been for many years a distinguished minister of Christ, and the other a pious lawyer.

As I entered the habitation of one, who a short time before had, like Mary, chosen the good part, I found her animated with holy joy and praise. Her views of divine

things were so clear and impressive, that she wanted all around to assist her in loving and adoring the Saviour. "O," said she, "I could not rest in my bed this morning, but was obliged to rise early to praise the Lord."

The enjoyment of these believers rose higher, perhaps, than that of young Christians generally; but all, even those who have been most devoted to worldly pleasures, acknowledge that they were utter strangers to true happiness until they found it in communion with God. Divine grace subdues the conflicting passions of the soul and brings the whole man into subjection to the authority of God. It purifies the heart, refines the taste, guides the intellect, upholds in trouble, supports in death, and sheds upon the soul the clear light of a blissful immortality. O, what precious consolation the believer finds in communion with God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, in having no will but his, and no employment but to do that will! Here is pure, substan-

tial happiness. It flows sweetly into the soul from God, its boundless and eternal source.

Brainerd experienced this happiness when he said, "I saw so much of the excellency of Christ's kingdom, and the infinite desirableness of its advancement in the world, that it swallowed up all my other thoughts, and made me willing, yea, even rejoice, to be made a pilgrim or a hermit in the wilderness, to my dying moment, if I might thereby promote the blessed interests of the great Redeemer. If ever my soul presented itself to God without any reserve, it did so now. The language of my thoughts and disposition now was, Here am I, Lord: send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort in earth; send me even to death itself, if it be but in thy service and to promote thy kingdom."

Dr. Payson was drinking at the fountain of undying pleasure, when he said, "O,

what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will ! Since I have lost my will I have found happiness. There is no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desire but that God's will may be accomplished." He was asked, "Do you feel yourself reconciled ?" "O, that is too cold. I rejoice, I triumph ; and this happiness will endure as long as God himself, for it consists in admiring and adoring him !"

The holy delight which President Edwards enjoyed was sometimes enrapturing. He observes, "I walked alone in a solitary place in my father's pasture for contemplation ; and, as I walked there, and looked upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction ; majesty and meekness joined together. It was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty, and also a majestic meekness, an awful sweetness, a high, and great, and holy gentleness. After

this, my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness."

I have allowed these eminent saints to speak for themselves on the subject of their spiritual consolations, and have introduced them here to illustrate the nature and amount of that enjoyment which God, even in this life, often imparts to his eminently spiritual and devoted servants. The testimony of these believers, on this subject, is in perfect harmony with the declarations of the Word of God. The Psalmist exclaims, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." Paul and Silas, in the dreariness of a prison, smarting under their wounds, and loaded with heavy chains, rejoiced exceedingly while they prayed and sang praises to God.

The emperor Charles the Fifth, who had obtained the highest earthly honors, and swayed his sceptre over an extensive do-

minion, having cheerfully renounced all his earthly distinctions for the pleasure of religious retirement, has left on record this important testimony: "I have tasted more satisfaction in my solitude, in one day, than in all the triumphs of my former reign. The sincere study, profession, and practice of the Christian religion have in them such joys and sweetness as are seldom found in courts and grandeur."

Let us now see what the religion of Jesus can do for the soul in the hour of death, that trying season, when all the springs of earthly happiness are dried up. Stephen, the martyr, with a countenance beaming with celestial beauty, died in the triumphs of faith, in full prospect of eternal glory; and, amidst great earthly sufferings, breathed out this remarkable prayer for his enemies — "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" and then sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

Halyburton, animated with holy joy, exclaimed, in triumph, just before he expired, "Glory, glory to Him! O, what of God do



I see ! I have never seen any thing like it. The beginning and end of religion are wonderfully sweet. I long for his salvation. I bless his name. I have found him. I am taken up in blessing him. I am dying, rejoicing in the Lord. This is a miracle ! pain without pain ! You see a man dying a monument of the glorious power of astonishing grace ! ”

Mr. Augustus M. Toplady closed a long and eminently holy life by a very triumphant death. He said, “O, how this soul of mine longs to be gone ! Like an imprisoned bird, it longs to take its flight. O, that I had the wings of a dove ! I should flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest forever. I long to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” At another time, he said, “O, what a day of sunshine has this been to me ! I have no words to express it ; it is unutterable ! O, my friends, how good our God is ! Almost without interruption, his presence has been with me.” Being near his end, having awakened out

of sleep, he said, "O, what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heavens?" Just before he expired, he said, "The sky is clear; there is no cloud. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

From the dying testimony of these believers, you can form some idea of the happiness which God imparts to those who belong to the household of faith, even amidst the trying conflicts of dissolving nature. This is dying testimony; and such, surely, if any, may be relied on as strictly true. If the followers of Jesus do not all die in triumph, they always depart in peace, and their rest will be glorious. Such joys and triumphs are not the portion of the ungodly. Their hope expires in death, and their lamp goes out when it is most needed. And now, perhaps, you are ready to ask, "Have Christians no trials?" O yes! they are encompassed with tribulation; they have foes without, and fears within; but the trial of their faith worketh patience, experience, and a hope that maketh not ashamed. They

have conflicts, severe and long, but these shall terminate in victory. They have sorrows; but their sorrows shall be exchanged for unspeakable and everlasting joy. In all their trials God is with them, and his comforts delight their soul.

But the Christian's happiness does not terminate in death, for there remaineth a rest to the people of God; a rest from sin, and toil, and pain, and death, where tears are wiped away, and sorrows are unknown; a rest with the eternal God, the glorious Saviour, the blessed Comforter; a rest with saints and angels, in all their celestial beauty, amidst the glories, the wonders, the thanksgivings of immortality, at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The saints in heaven will be made perfect in holiness. In that blissful habitation there will be no sin, nor any liability to it—no sickness, sorrow, or death, nor any liability to them. The saints will be clothed with celestial beauty, and shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They will be

near Christ, and be like him, and see him as he is. They will behold their Father's face without a cloud, and share unceasingly his paternal and benignant smiles. Their joy will be full, their love perfect, and their happiness complete.

“ O, the delights, the heavenly joys,  
The glories of the place,  
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams  
Of his o'erflowing grace ! ”

The saints in heaven, with their capacious and growing powers, will contemplate, without weariness, the wonders of redeeming love, its topless height, its fathomless depths, its measureless length and breadth. They will be learning more and more of the power and majesty, the holiness and love, of their great Creator, forever and ever. Their knowledge and felicity will be accumulating and endless, and this will be a crowning excellence in the cup of their overflowing joy. What a heaven will that be, where every heart shall be

holy, and every power active, and every song perfect, and every spirit shall be filled with the highest, purest delight, and God shall be all in all. O, as the saints shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, through the length and breadth of his eternal kingdom, gazing with ever-growing delight upon the sublimity and glory of all his works, and admiring and adoring Him who sitteth upon the throne in strains of the sweetest, purest, loftiest praise, they will understand the nature of heavenly blessedness, and know, as they never can before, what it is to be filled in heaven with all the fulness of God.

And now, dear young reader, I have described to you, though feebly, the nature of that happiness which you may obtain by renouncing the world, and becoming a follower of Jesus. In the work of salvation, God comes as far as the cross, and he can come no further; and there, amidst the smiles of infinite love, he offers you all this unspeakable happiness without money and

without price. He offers to pardon all your sins, to give you repentance and faith, a hope in Jesus, consolation in communing with him on earth, his presence and support in death, acquittal in judgment, and glory, honor, and immortality in an endless heaven. To obtain this imperishable treasure, you must meet your God at the cross, bow to his authority, and, with your whole heart, choose him as your portion. You must go to the feet of Jesus, confess and forsake your sins, and receive him as the end of the law for righteousness. The moment this is done your sins are blotted out, your name is written in heaven, and life everlasting is yours. And can you hesitate what to do? Will you deliberately prefer shadows to substance, sin to holiness, toys to gems, the friendship of the world to the favor of God, the trifles of earth to the treasures of heaven, the sorrows and pains of an endless death to fulness of joy and pleasures at God's right hand forevermore? Should the Saviour stand by your side, and

describe to you a country where the inhabitants never sleep, where there is no sin, trouble, nor death, where all are perfectly holy and happy, and every bosom is filled with peace, love, and the purest delight, would you not like to dwell in that country? And should he assure you that the way to it is very pleasant, and offer to accompany you every step until you should reach that blissful region, would you not be up at once, and gird yourself for the journey? Now, heaven is that region, and the way to it is pleasant; a way of holiness, by repentance and faith in Jesus. O, how plain and easy! A child may walk in it. How delightful, too! And now what will you do? Can you resist the argument? Can you avoid the inference? Must I urge you to go to heaven, to be holy and happy, and dwell with God and Christ forever? Can this be necessary, when you know that in a moment death may remove you from a world of probation, and extinguish at once the hope of everlasting felicity? O that

God, by his gracious Spirit, may open your eyes, enable you to feel the power of his truth, work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and constrain you to say, with a contrite, believing heart, "As for me, I will serve the Lord" !



## CHAPTER VI.

*The immediate Choice of God urged from the Love of Christ.*

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. — John 15: 13.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. — Rom. 5: 8.

I SHALL urge you, in this chapter, to yield yourself immediately unto God, as “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service,” from a consideration of the love of Jesus. From the moment the Saviour undertook the work of redemption, his heart was set on its accomplishment with unextinguishable ardor. For four thousand years before he appeared in our world, love to sinners burned in his bosom with a quenchless flame. This is a

part of that great mystery of godliness into which angels desire to look, and which, with all their mighty intellects, they are unable fully to comprehend. That the Saviour should love his Father is not to be wondered at ; that he should love himself is not a matter of surprise ; that he should love the pure spirits around his throne is in perfect harmony with the essential features of his nature ; but that he should love unto death, even the death of the cross, a world of entirely depraved sinners, who were rebels against his throne, may well excite our admiration. It was love to sinners which constrained Jesus to fold and lay aside the vestments of his glory ; to leave his crown and sceptre and regal authority at his Father's right hand, and appear in our world in the form of a servant. It was love to sinners which shone in his features, and beat in his bosom with the first pulsations of life, as he lay, a helpless infant, in the manger. It was love to sinners which carried him through the streets

of Jerusalem, administering life, and health, and comfort to the diseased and the dying. It was love to sinners which enabled him to bear so meekly, and without a murmur, his agony in the garden, the treachery of a disciple, the false and bitter accusations of priests and scribes, their contemptuous spitting, smiting, and mockery, the derision of Herod and his men of war, the unjust condemnation and cruel scourging of Pilate, the insulting crown of thorns, and the provoking, hypocritical worship of his malignant persecutors. It was love to sinners which summoned his powers to bear his cross to the place of execution, and then consent to be nailed to it by his merciless oppressors. O! it was dying love to sinners, which heaven could not contain, nor earth comprehend, that enabled him to sustain the unutterable pressure of a world's iniquities, until he bowed his head in death and gave up the ghost. This is dying love, at which the sun hid his face in midnight, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves

were opened, and darkness covered the land at noon-day. O, dear reader, I am speaking to you of the dying love of Jesus; and can you not feel? It put out the sun; and can you gaze upon it without emotion? It shook the earth to its centre; and will not your spirit tremble and bow before it? It rent asunder the flinty rocks of Judea; and will not your heart yield to its mighty power? It waked the dead; and will not you receive from it the impulses of spiritual life? It covered the land with mourning; and have you no tears of contrition to shed, no heart to mourn for those sins which crucified the Son of God? Look upon Jesus in his dying agony. What kindness, what sympathy, what melting tenderness are here! The Son of God in tears, in death! Here is love that moves and melts the soul; love that wept, and bled, and died, to save the lost. Here is love that invites the guilty. "Look unto me, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Here is love that expostulates with the

wandering. "Behold my hands and my feet." "Turn ye, for why will ye die?" Here is love that heals the wounded, pouring in the oil and the wine, and binding up the broken in heart. Here is love that proclaims liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

"O, for such love let rocks and hills  
Their lasting silence break ;  
And all harmonious, human tongues  
The Saviour's praises speak !"

And now, shall God, your heavenly Father, so lovely and glorious, speak to you in paternal kindness through the dying love of Jesus, and say, "My son, give me thy heart," and you refuse it? Shall he say, again, "Choose you, this day, whom you will serve ;" and can you, while standing close by the cross, and gazing upon a dying Jesus, who bought you with agonies and death, still defer the choice? Will you be heedless, stubborn, and rebellious, amid such affecting tokens of infinite love and

mercy? Can this be right? But let us not stop here. The love of Jesus for you and for other sinners languished not when he expired upon the cross. It lived in death; it breathed in the tomb; it rose in triumph from the grave, and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, to intercede for you, and plead your cause before the eternal throne. It lives in heaven, in all its infinite expansiveness and vigor, to build mansions for the saints, and beautify them with glory; and when the redeemed have completed their work on earth, it descends in a chariot of mercy, and takes them up to their everlasting home in the skies, and fills them with all the fulness of God. It lives on, and lives on, through the wasteless ages of eternity, to fill up the measure of their joy, and deepen the tide of their pleasure, and make them shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, forever and ever. O, the enduring, the infinite love of Jesus! Who can contemplate it without emotion? What heart can be so hard as to

withstand its melting, all-subduing power? Shall all this love for you be in vain? Shall the treasures of infinite benevolence be poured upon you, in all your spiritual poverty and wretchedness, to make you rich in faith, and an heir of God's everlasting kingdom; and will you refuse to be thus enriched and honored by a being of unsearchable love? Were you perishing with hunger, you would most gladly receive provision adapted to your wants, and offered you by the hand of an affectionate father; and will you, in all your spiritual starvation, refuse the bread of life offered you by the infinite God, of which if a man eat, he shall live forever? Were you languishing under a painful and fatal disease, which but one physician in the world could heal, and that physician stood by your side with the healing remedy in his hand, would you not most thankfully and gladly receive it? Now, you are, in reality, languishing under a fatal, moral disease, which sin has produced. Die you must, to all eternity, un-

less recovered by sovereign grace. There is but one physician in the universe who can heal you. That physician is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. In love he comes to your relief. He stands by your side with the sovereign remedy in his hand, and, from his overflowing goodness, offers it without money and without price. He even entreats you to receive it, and assures you, if you will follow his directions—repent and believe—you shall live forever. And will you deliberately dash this cup of blessings from your lips, and sink to a death whose pains can never be alleviated? Were you condemned to be executed by the laws of the land, you would most joyfully receive a pardon offered you by a benevolent judge; and will you, under the condemning sentence of God's holy law, and passing onward to the most fearful retributions, refuse a full pardon for all your infinite sins, purchased by the blood of Jesus, and offered to you freely by the great Judge of quick and dead, on



the reasonable terms of repentance and faith — a pardon, too, which will free you from endless sinning and endless suffering, make you a favorite of heaven, and prepare you to be admitted, ultimately, to all its boundless and imperishable treasures? Shall Jesus, God's only Son, moved by infinite love, bear your sins in his own body, and submit cheerfully to the painful and ignominious death of the cross, to save you from endless perdition; and will you neglect or refuse to escape that perdition, by yielding yourself a willing sacrifice to God? Shall he, beholding you suspended by the slender thread of life over eternal burnings, hasten to your rescue, and extend for your salvation his mighty arm of infinite love; and will you thrust from you that arm, and sink to the fire that shall never go out? Is this a dictate of wisdom? Do reason and conscience approve it? You must see clearly, I think, that the argument drawn from the love of Jesus, urging you to bow immediately to God, and choose him as your portion, is

truly overwhelming. Look at it as you will, regard it as you may, it still appeals, with amazing power, to the tenderest sensibilities of the heart.

“ I was a traitor, doomed to fire,  
Bound to sustain eternal pains ;  
He flew, on wings of strong desire,  
Assumed my guilt, and took my chains.

“ Infinite grace ! Almighty charms !  
Stand in amaze, ye rolling skies ; —  
Jesus, the God, extends his arms,  
Hangs on a cross of love, and dies !

“ Did pity ever stoop so low,  
Dressed in divinity and blood ?  
Was ever rebel courted so  
In groans of an expiring God ? ”

The love of this atoning Saviour has melted the cold heart of a Greenlander, amidst his eternal snows, and, having made his pathway down to the grave luminous and pleasant, has enabled him to exclaim, in death, “ I do love my Saviour,” and to say, with a joyful smile, “ they are come ; the angels

are come to fetch away my soul;" and then the happy spirit, borne upward on the wings of love, has ascended to its everlasting rest. And will your heart remain cold and dead amidst the full tide of redeeming love, and under the melting influence of the Spirit of God? I must, with divine help, hold you to this point, immediate and unconditional submission to God, while standing by the cross. O, what a spot, illumined by the Sun of Righteousness, blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit, surrounded with mercy, crowned with grace! All heaven looks upon it with the deepest interest. I beseech you not to leave it until Christ has formed in your soul a hope of glory.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The immediate Choice of God urged from his declarative Glory, and repeated Commands.*

Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. — 1 Cor. 10: 31.

For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. — 1 Cor. 6: 20.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. — 1 Sam. 15: 22.

I SHALL urge you, in this chapter, to consecrate yourself immediately to God, that you may, by works of piety, glorify him in your body and spirit, which are his.

The glory of God is of two kinds, — essential and declarative. His essential glory consists in the blending of all his natural and moral perfections, so as to render him an infinitely amiable and lovely being. It

exists entirely within himself, and is not affected at all by the obedience or disobedience of his creatures. As God is unchangeable in his being and perfections, his essential glory can never be increased or diminished, but remains the same through the whole range of his eternal existence. Before he had any works to rejoice in, it was the object of his delight, and the theme of his contemplation in his social nature, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, from eternity. Hence the Saviour prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

God's declarative glory is the exhibition of himself in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. "The heavens declare the glory of God," and "for his pleasure they are and were created." In them shine clearly his eternal power and godhead. God's declarative glory, then, can be increased or diminished at his pleasure. He can create a world, and thus dis-

play his glory ; or he can annihilate it, and conceal at once this reflection of himself from the eyes of the universe. All intelligent and obedient creatures do something to reflect forth the divine glory. Holy angels and saints in heaven glorify God by their unceasing love, obedience, and praise. Abraham glorified God by his faith, Moses by his meekness, Job by his patience, and Paul by his untiring zeal and great devotedness in preaching the gospel and winning souls to Christ. Brainerd, Edwards, and Payson glorified God by their eminent holiness ; and so should you. For this sublime purpose your heavenly Father gave you being, and endowed you with all your immortal powers. “ Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do,” says an inspired apostle, “ do all to the glory of God.” The great end of your being will never be answered until you give up your heart entirely to God and begin to act for his glory. This he requires at your hand ; and he requires it now, in the freshness and

bloom of your youthful existence. When this is done, angels will rejoice, and the heavenly host, in their new song of praise, will glorify God in a higher degree on your account. This great work, so happily begun in choosing God as your reconciled Father and portion, you must pursue to the divine glory cheerfully, and with all your heart, while you continue in the present world. By a life of prayer and faith, humility and meekness, by loving God with all the heart, and your neighbor as yourself, and doing good to all as you have opportunity, you are to shine as a light in the world, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven. If you honor God by a life of piety on earth, you will die in the Lord, and enter heaven, and there, in ceaseless activity, with powers greatly enlarged, made perfect in holiness, filled with love and joy unspeakable, and shining in the pure, moral likeness of your adorable Saviour, you will glorify God forever, in a manner of which you have no

adequate conception. And are you willing to withhold from God that revenue of praise which he most justly deserves, and which you are capable of rendering? It would not be right for you, as a creature, if you had the power, to blot out that beautiful morning star, which shines so brightly, and reflects the divine glory upon other worlds. But we are assured, in the Bible, that they who are wise, or truly godly, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever. Now you may become wise or truly godly; you may, instrumentally, turn many to righteousness, and shine as a star in God's moral heavens forever. And is it right for you to blot out that star, and prevent it from shining to the glory of its great Creator? But this you will do, if you withhold your heart from God. Unless you are born of the Spirit, and choose God as your portion, you can never enter heaven, nor shine there to the divine glory as a bright morning star



forever and ever. O, dear young reader, you ought to begin now to glorify God by an obedient and holy life. The condemnation of Belshazzar, in the midst of his revelry, when he saw a hand write his doom upon the wall, was, that he had not acted to the divine glory. "And the God, in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways," said the prophet Daniel, "hast thou not glorified." Dan. 5: 23. And this must be your condemnation if you reject the Saviour and die unpardoned.

Allow me still farther to press upon you immediate submission to God from a consideration of his repeated commands. God says to you, "Repent and be converted;" — "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" — Strive to "enter in at the strait gate;" — "Pray without ceasing;" — "Enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret;" — "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" — "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God;" — "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

These are some of the commands of God, which you are required immediately to obey. They are all important, reasonable, and good ; if obeyed, they constitute you an heir of heaven ; if disobeyed, they leave you an heir of hell. And now, shall God, your heavenly Father, lay his commands upon you in vain ? Think a moment who he is ; how great, how glorious. He created you ; he upholds and blesses you from day to day. His claims upon you are absolute and sovereign ; they are righteous claims. He only requires you to do right, to be holy, to be like himself, and do his pleasure. Should a kind father command you to perform a service which would make you rich, and honorable, and exceedingly happy, would you refuse to do it ? And shall God, your heavenly Father, require you to give up your sins, repent, and believe in Jesus, to love him with all the heart, to become perfectly holy, and finally enter heaven, and be unspeakably happy and blessed with him forever, and will you

refuse to do it? Holy angels, with all their noble intellects, see enough in God to fill them with unutterable delight, and call forth, unceasingly, their strongest love and loftiest praise. God has only to speak, and they fly, with their mightiest energies, to do his will. And will you refuse to do that which angels regard as their highest honor to perform? All the considerations which induce those holy beings to love and obey their God should operate upon you, with this additional, powerful, and constraining motive, that Jesus died for you, and not for them. And has it come to this, even in the morning of life, that you can deliberately refuse to obey your God and Saviour, a being of infinite love, power, and excellence? O, has it come to this, that you must be entreated and importuned to become a child of God, a follower of Jesus, an heir of all things, a companion of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises, and finally sit down in heaven, with Abraham, Moses, and Paul, and all the

redeemed of the Lord, to behold his glory, and sing his praise, and contemplate the wonders of his love, and to drink at the river of pleasure which flows at his right hand forevermore? Shall the plan of redemption be devised and executed for you in vain? Shall the way to heaven be made straight and plain for your feet, and you refuse to walk in it? Shall invitations and entreaties, warnings and threatenings, be to no purpose? Shall Jesus, in infinite love and compassion, beseech you to obey and glorify your Father in heaven, until his head be wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, and you heed it not? These are momentous and stirring questions, and how shall they be answered? It is for you to decide. The eye of the great Jehovah is upon you; he knows well the purpose which you are now forming; he approves the right—he abhors the wrong. There is nothing done to any saving purpose until you submit to God and believe in Christ. Submission to the

divine will is the first step in the way to heaven. O that you would take that step before you close this book ! I urge you to it—delays are dangerous. You may die in a moment, and fall, unpardoned, into the hands of the living God. I am aware that you need help from above, and that help is at hand. You have sought it, I trust, and will continue to seek it, in fervent prayer. Could you realize the importance of having God for your friend, as some do who are just about to enter eternity, you would choose him with all your heart, and without delay. I once entered a room where a beloved youth was dying, and, having directed him to Jesus as his only refuge, and urged him to give his heart to God, I asked, "And what shall I tell your young companions?" "Tell them," said he, in effect, and with a look and tone of voice which I shall not attempt to describe,— "tell them to repent, and give their hearts to the Saviour ; tell them to seek religion now—a death-bed is a poor place to prepare for

eternity !” As I sat by his side, and saw the warm current of life ebbing gently away, until his spirit took its flight to the invisible world, I felt that I must urge the young, with great solemnity and earnestness, immediately to make their peace with God. And now, coming from the death-bed of this dear youth, with the Bible open before me, and death and judgment in prospect, I urge you to choose God as your portion without delay. I urge you to do it from a sense of duty. I entreat you, by the worth of your precious soul, and the danger of losing it ; by the condescension and love of the Son of God ; by his bloody agony in the garden ; by his condemnation at the bar of Pilate ; by the crown of thorns, and the nails which pierced him ; and by his ignominious death on the cross on your account, — to repent immediately, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. I entreat you, once more, by a consideration of the glory of God and his repeated commands ; by the

happiness you may enjoy on earth in communion with him ; by the anticipation of a peaceful and triumphant death, and an eternal weight of glory in a world without end,—to yield yourself unto God as one alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Do I hear you say, “These considerations are weighty ; the argument is conclusive ; I ought now to be a regenerated child of God, an humble follower of Jesus ; I must not, I will not, withhold my affections from him any longer ; he deserves my heart, my life, my all ; Father, into thy hands I commend my immortal interests ; —

‘ Here’s my heart : O, take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above ! ’

I do sincerely, in humble reliance on divine grace, and with all my heart, so far as I know it, choose the one living and true God as my eternal portion, the Lord Jesus Christ as my Redeemer, Intercessor, and

Judge, and the Holy Ghost as my Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter. I choose holiness as my chief good, the Bible as my daily counsellor, saints and angels above, and the redeemed of the Lord on earth, as my companions, and heaven as my everlasting home.

' 'Tis done — the great transaction's done ;  
I am my Lord's, and he is mine ;  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine.' "

Do I hear you say all this ? Is it even so ? Have you, in reality, come to this delightful result ? Have you made the safe and happy choice for eternity ; and is it your settled purpose, by the aid of divine grace, to persevere in holy obedience until crowned with glory, honor, and immortality, in the presence of God and the Lamb in heaven ? O blessed choice ! O glorious result ! " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

And now, my dear friend, if you have



sincerely, and with all your heart, made this happy choice, I will say, for your encouragement, it is pleasing to God. He takes peculiar delight in those who cheerfully obey him. He says, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." It is pleasing to Christ, who has all power in heaven and earth, and who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. It is pleasing to the Holy Ghost, whose agency you still need, and by whose sanctifying influence, through the atoning blood of Jesus, you are to be made perfectly holy, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. It is pleasing to the holy angels, who are God's ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. It is pleasing to saints in heaven, and especially to that pious and devoted parent who wept and prayed for you on earth, and now rejoices exceedingly on your account before the eternal throne. It is pleasing to all

who love the Saviour on earth, who are to be your companions in trials and joys till you and they sit down where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. What a noble company you have pleased by choosing God as your portion. O, what a cloud of faithful witnesses surround you. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

But I wish to give you a word of counsel. Remember that you have enemies still. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are against you. These are active, powerful foes; they never sleep, they never tire. But, while you trust solely in God for strength and grace to do his pleasure, they can never essentially harm you. Your own heart, also, is exceedingly wicked and treacherous. To overcome these enemies, then, you must have on the whole armor of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

**You must watch always, and pray without ceasing. Pray in your closet, regularly, three times a day. Never omit it when in health. Be so much in the habit of secret prayer that you would feel the loss of it, if omitted, more than the loss of your daily food. Be very humble and penitent in view of your sins; confess them freely, and ask divine forgiveness. Humility is a most lovely Christian grace; God delights in it. The lower you sink in the depths of true humiliation the higher you will rise in moral excellence. Study the Bible daily, with close attention and fervent prayer. Commit the richest portions of it to memory, and ever remember that all of it is the Word of God, and your only sure guide to life everlasting. Love the Bible; prize it above all other books; bind it to your heart as the richest treasure, and cherish for it the highest respect, because it is the Word of God. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. On this day of sacred rest**

lay aside all worldly cares and pursuits, and spend the time in religious reading, meditation, and prayer. Be always in your place in the sanctuary, and be there in season, with a devout and heavenly spirit. Strive, on this day, to make great progress in holiness. Hunger and thirst after righteousness; long and pant for the living God; and, by a life of eminent piety, convince all that you are born from above. Remember that the eye of God is always upon you; that he knows all your heart, and will call you into judgment for every secret thing. Think much of Christ, his life, sufferings, and death, and his intercession for you at the right hand of God. Love him with all your heart, follow him closely, and trust alone in his righteousness for acceptance with God. By fervent prayer, and a meek and humble spirit, invite and cherish the constant presence of the Holy Ghost; be filled with his heavenly influence, yield yourself to his guidance, and rely upon him

unceasingly for strength and grace to run with patience the race set before you in the gospel. Never indulge in anger, malice, or revenge. These passions are exceedingly hateful in the sight of God, and will grieve the Holy Comforter. Cultivate and cherish a spirit of holy, expansive benevolence, and choose for your associates the most devoted and spiritual Christians. Ever remember that you must die soon, and appear before God. Keep the day of judgment and the glorious and fearful realities of eternity steadily in view, and "I pray God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance

upon thee, and give thee peace." "Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."

## JESUS A GUEST.

BEHOLD the Savior at thy door !  
 He gently knocks, has knocked before ;  
 Has waited long, is waiting still ; —  
 You treat no other friend so ill.

O lovely attitude ! — he stands  
 With melting heart and outstretched hands !  
 O matchless kindness ! and he shows  
 This matchless kindness to his foes.

Admit him ; for the human breast  
 Ne'er entertained so kind a guest ; —  
 Admit him ; or the hour's at hand  
 When at his door denied you'll stand.

“ Open, my heart ; Lord, enter in ;  
 Slay every foe, and conquer sin !  
 I now to thee my all resign ;  
 My body, soul, and all are thine.”



## “WHY WILL YE DIE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL !”

SINNERS, turn ! — why will ye die ?  
 God your Maker asks you why ;  
 God, who did your being give —  
 Made you with himself to live.

He the fatal cause demands,  
 Asks the work of his own hands :  
 Why, O thankless creatures, why  
 Will ye spurn his love, and die ?

Sinners, turn ! — why will ye die ?  
 God your Savior asks you why ;  
 He who his own life did give,  
 That ye might forever live.  
 Will you let him die in vain ?  
 Crucify your Lord again ?  
 Why, O ransomed sinners, why  
 Will ye slight his grace, and die ?

Sinners, turn ! — why will ye die ?  
 God the Spirit asks you why ;  
 He who all your lives hath strove —  
 Moved you to embrace his love.  
 Will ye not his love receive ?  
 Will ye still refuse to live ?  
 Why, O long-sought sinners, why  
 Will ye grieve your God and die ?



#### SINNER RESOLVING TO GO TO CHRIST.

Come, humble sinner, in whose breast  
 A thousand thoughts revolve, —  
 Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed,  
 And make this last resolve : —



" I'll go to Jesus, though my sin  
 Hath like a mountain rose ; —  
 I know his courts ; I'll enter in,  
 Whatever may oppose.

" Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,  
 And there my guilt confess ;  
 I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone,  
 Without his sovereign grace.

" I'll to the gracious King approach,  
 Whose sceptre pardon gives ;  
 Perhaps he may command my touch,  
 And then the suppliant lives.

" Perhaps he will admit my plea —  
 Perhaps will hear my prayer ;  
 But, if I perish, I will pray,  
 And perish only there.

" I can but perish if I go ; —  
 I am resolved to try ;  
 For, if I stay away, I know  
 I must forever die."

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#### THE SINNER HASTENED.

HASTEN, O sinner, to be wise,  
 And stay not for the morrow's sun !  
 The longer wisdom you despise,  
 The harder is it to be won.

O, hasten mercy to implore,  
And stay not for the morrow's sun !  
For fear thy season should be o'er,  
Before this evening stage be run.

Hasten, O sinner, to return,  
And stay not for the morrow's sun !  
For fear thy lamp should cease to burn,  
Before the needful work is done.

Hasten, O sinner, to be blest,  
And stay not for the morrow's sun !  
For fear the curse should thee arrest,  
Before the morrow is begun.







